

# NUTRITION PROGRAMS FACTS

## *FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE (FNS)*

### FOOD STAMP PROGRAM NUTRITION EDUCATION

- ✓ Beginning in fiscal year 1998, the Food and Nutrition Service made a renewed commitment to nutrition education in all the Food Service nutrition programs. A Nutrition Services Staff (NSS) has been created in FNS to refocus efforts toward nutrition and nutrition education.
- ✓ The Food Stamp Program has specifically renewed its commitment to nutrition education by hiring a nutritionist, who is devoted full time to technical assistance, support and promotion of good nutrition and nutrition education.
- ✓ As the cornerstone of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition assistance programs, the Food Stamp Program plays a vital role in helping to improve nutrition in the Nation, particularly among low-income individuals.
- ✓ The goal of the Food Stamp nutrition education program is to provide educational programs that increase, within a limited budget, the likelihood of all food stamp recipients making healthy food choices consistent with the most recent dietary advice as reflected in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.
- ✓ FNS encourages States to provide nutrition education messages that focus on strengthening and reinforcing the link between food security and a healthy diet.
- ✓ USDA matches the dollars a State is able to spend on its Food Stamp nutrition education program.
- ✓ States must receive approval from FNS for Nutrition Education Plans that explain their budget and intended nutrition education activities for the year.
- ✓ There are 53 State agencies in the Food Stamp Program. While the nutrition education plan is optional, FNS actively encourages States to develop plans for foodstamp participants and eligibles.
- ✓ State agency commitment to nutrition education has grown rapidly in recent years. In 1992 five States had approved nutrition education State Plans with federal share expenditures for nutrition activities in that year was \$661,000. By fiscal year 2001, the number of State agencies with approved nutrition education plans has grown to 48, with estimated Federal dollar amount of \$148 million, which represents 50 percent of States' total expenditures for Food Stamp Nutrition Education.
- ✓ In FY 2000: The FSP provided benefits to 17.2 million people.
  - ☛ 58 percent children
  - ☛ 38.9 percent adults
  - ☛ 8.2 percent elderly adults
  - ☛ 7.3 million households

- ✓ FNS provide nutrition education guidance to States to encourage them to use the most effective nutrition education tools and strategies available. The guidance also helps the States develop a clear, comprehensive document for implementing their state plan.
- ✓ FNS encourages States to focus on specific core elements when assessing needs, developing objectives and outcomes, such as:
  - ☛ Food Security
  - ☛ Food Safety
  - ☛ Dietary Quality
  - ☛ Food Resource Management/Shopping Behaviors
  - ☛ System and Environment Changes
- ✓ The Cooperative Extension System (CES) is the predominant State sponsoring agency that is contracted to develop and deliver food stamp nutrition education programs. However, public health departments, welfare agencies and other university academic centers are also sponsoring agencies that deliver nutrition education to food stamp recipients.
- ✓ Food Stamp Nutrition Education Grants (12/1998 to 12/2002):
  - ☛ The Community Food Resource Center in New York received a grant of \$173,000 to provide nutrition education to low-income families in NYC and strengthen their access to wholesome and nutritious food at a reasonable price. The center targets 12 of the poorest communities in the city.
  - ☛ The Reading Terminal Farmers' Market Trust in Pennsylvania received a grant of \$817,475 to foster further development of community nutrition education collaborative in areas where the Trust operates farmers' markets. The goal is to better integrate nutrition education services and resources that link health nutrition, food, education and social services.
  - ☛ The Contra Costa County Health Services in California received \$355,853 grant to provide nutrition education to families. CCCHS uses dietary workshops, display mailings and other social marketing techniques to influence healthy eating. The target population is low-income families.
  - ☛ The Harvester's Community Food Network in Kansas received a \$92,660 grant to teach nutrition education through lecture, activities, reading materials and hands-on cooking. The participants are low or no income families, and are taught to provide better nutrition for their families, prepare nutritious meals, and stretch their food budget dollar using the USDA Food Guide Pyramid and the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
  - ☛ The Food Bank of Delaware received a \$95,000 grant to conduct a Basic Life Skills Course, with special emphasis placed on limited individuals and families who are not eligible for food assistance. The course runs for ten weeks and includes classes devoted to nutrition and food preparation, money management, and self-esteem.